

The Judicial Council of California is the constitutionally created policymaking body of the California courts. The council meets at least six times a year for business meetings that are open to the public and videocast live via the California Courts website. What follows is a formatted and unedited transcript of the last meeting. The official record of each meeting, the meeting minutes, are usually approved by the council at the next business meeting. Much more information about this meeting, the work of the Judicial Council, and the role of the state court system is available on the California Courts website at *courts.ca.gov*.

>> Welcome to this meeting of the Judicial Council of California for Friday, July 17th. The meeting is now in session. During our technical checks for the live webcast, we've confirmed the attendance of a quorum of Judicial Council members. Based on our agenda, we anticipate we'll adjourn at about 12:05 p.m. Before we continue with the business meeting, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the loss of two extraordinary members of our branch, Justice Joan Irion and Chief Judge Richard Blake. Justice Irion passed away last month and leaves behind a remarkable legacy. Having devoted her career to the fair and effective administration of justice. She brought to her Judicial Council service that same commitment to excellence on the Fourth District Court of Appeal, Division One where she served following her time as a judge with the San Diego Superior Court. As chair of the Judicial Council's Rules Committee she helped shape proposals that will benefit California court users for many years to come. Her engagement in the information technology modernization program was equally impactful, helping to expand access and improve services statewide. Justice Irion was a tireless advocate for civic education and trust and confidence in the judiciary. Her leadership of the National Association of Women Judges informed judges project reflected her deep belief that an independent judiciary understood and trusted by the public is essential to a functioning democracy. That same commitment was evident in her work with the civil appellate self-help workshop, which has provided vital assistance to self-represented litigants in San Diego County. I know to many of you Justice Irion was more than a trusted and respected colleague. She was also a kind, caring, and thoughtful friend. Our entire judicial branch is stronger for her dedicated service, her insight, her compassion and her leadership. We also learned of tribal court leader Chief Judge Richard Blake's passing in May and express our appreciation, too, for the contributions he made to the council's work. In particular the Tribal Court-State Court forum and to the California justice system as a whole. Judge Blake served the California judiciary for over 20 years with dedication and integrity. As a judge he was committed to protecting the rights and liberties of tribal communities and all Californians and ensuring justice was fair and accessible. Judge Blake is perhaps best remembered for a pivotal moment in 2009 when he reached out to Chief Justice Ron George to request a meeting between tribal court and state court judges. That initiative helped strengthen the relationship between California's tribal and state courts based on his vision of collaboration, mutual respect and a shared commitment to justice. Throughout his career he worked to strengthen the judicial systems that our communities depend on. Judge Blake leaves behind a legacy of fairness, leadership, and a lasting positive change. We're grateful for his service, too, and proud to honor his memory. Now I want to recognize and thank our departing members who are finishing their terms on the council and also to welcome our incoming members who will begin their terms, most of you, in September. Thank you, also, to

our Judicial Council staff who facilitated orientation, introducing them to their new roles and responsibilities. I'd like to start with our departing members first. I want to acknowledge the service and contributions of the following six departing council members. Judge Maureen Hallahan, for her three years of service, which included serving as vice-chair of the Executive and Planning Committee. Thank you, Maureen. You can applaud for all of them. [Applause.]

>> I'm not sure the microphone is on, but it's been an honor and a privilege to serve on the Judicial Council. I will miss each and every one of you, but I know the great work will continue. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Judge Hallahan. Judge Jeffrey Kauffman for his one year of service as president of the California Judges Association. [Applause.]

>> Thank you for the opportunity. It's very important work that we do here, and I'm happy to see such a great group of people doing it. So thank you for the opportunity to spend a brief amount of time with you.

>> Thank you. And next we have, where is she, Presiding Judge Patricia Kelly for her year of service including chair of the council's Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee. [Applause.]

>> Thank you. I echo what's already been said. It's just been one of the highlights of my career to work with everybody here, especially you, Chief. It's been an honor.

>> Thank you. And next we have Commissioner and now Judge Ryan Davis for his two years of service including membership on the council's Executive and Planning and Rules Committee. [Applause.]

>> Thank you. It has been an honor, and I hope to find ways to continue to serve the judiciary through advisory committees, et cetera, in the future. So I hope to see you soon.

>> Thank you. And next we have someone with a little bit more time, Ms. Rachel Hill, for her nine years of service. On behalf of the State Bar and her participation with our Budget, Legislation, Technology and Rules Committee. [Applause.]

>> Thank you, Chief. I first want to say I am awed and have continued to be awed from day one for the work that's done on the council, the staff that is unparalleled. I think I said this last night but I think that if the general public could get a look under the hood and see all of the dedicated, tireless work, meticulous work that is done by the council and this staff and all of the advisory committees that they would have a renewed faith in government and in the judiciary. And I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with you and to work with all of you. I will miss you dearly. It's become like a second home. So it's actually a little emotional for me, but thank you so much.

>> Well, you can always come back.

>> Thank you. [Applause.]

>> Another individual who has made remarkable contributions and also nine years of them, Ms. Gretchen Nelson, who served on behalf of the State Bar and was involved primarily in our Executive and Planning and also Legislation Committee.

>> Well, thank you very much. This has been an honor of a lifetime. I never thought when it started nine years ago it would last nine years, but I was thrilled to be a part of it, I will say, and echo what Rachel said. The work that this organization does, the people that are committed to it, both staff, members of the judiciary and the lawyer members, is extraordinary and what makes the California judicial system the best in the world.

>> Thank you. Thank you all. On behalf of all of your colleagues, I express our gratitude for your public service, your dedication and commitment to the rule of law and all of your contributions and enhancing access to justice for all Californians through your service. Thank you. We will also continue to see six council members who are reappointed to new terms. I would like to thank them each. And they are as follows. Justice Carol Corrigan, Judge Bunmi Awoniyi, Judge Charles Crompton, Judge Moorman and Charles Johnson. There he is. Thank you. And also our court executive officer Kate Bieker. Thank you all. [Applause.] I'm so grateful to each of you for agreeing to stay on with us. We appreciate your commitment to continued service and will continue to rely on your talent and your expertise for the benefit of all Californians statewide. We are also fortunate to have the following individuals who are joining us as new council members and will help us advance our key goals and objectives that are reflected in the Judicial Council's strategic plan. So grateful to everyone who volunteers for these positions. It's the mix of experience and institutional knowledge combined with your new ideas and your fresh perspectives that really enables the council to do our work on behalf of the public. So I am pleased to announce we're adding to our knowledge and experience base with eight new incoming members, two of the new members have already begun their duties, and I will be administering their oaths of office shortly. Administrative Presiding Justice Mary Greenwood of the Sixth District Court of Appeal. [Applause.] And Mr. Chad Finke, court executive officer for the Alameda Superior Court. [Applause.] We also have six additional new members who will begin their terms in September. I would like to welcome them all and recognize those who are with us here today. We have Judge Nicole Bershon from the Los Angeles Superior Court. She will be representing the California Judges Association, and I see her in the back. [Applause.]

>> We have Presiding Judge Rodney Cortez from the San Bernardino Superior Court. I don't believe he's with us, but he was with us last night. We have Judge Eric Wersching from Orange County who is present. [Applause.] We have Commissioner Benjamin Cassady of the Sacramento Superior Court. [Applause.] We have Ms. Marta Alcumbrac, attorney from Los

Angeles. Thank you. [Applause.] And Ms. Alekxia Torres Stallings, an attorney member from Bakersfield. [Applause.]

>> Thank you all for volunteering for these positions. Thank you to everyone who submitted nominations for these positions as well. Just as I have enjoyed working with our members, I'm looking forward and excited about working with each of you here. I want to briefly comment on our judicial branch budget as well. This budget, as you know, reflects the governor's and the legislators' commitment to the branch. The funding helps to address increased operational costs for the trial courts and the rising cost for court interpreter services, appellate court appointed council. It accelerates progress on the five-year Infrastructure Plan for our courthouse construction and maintenance and importantly it also includes funding for 13 new judgeships. This will be over a period of five years to help meet the ongoing judicial workload challenges that our courts face. In particular in the counties with the greatest need. I very much appreciate the contributions of our Judicial Branch Budget Committee, the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee, Judge Moorman, Judge Hernandez, Judge Conklin and Ms. Fleming for guiding our budget process over the past year and also the planning and information sharing by all of the appellate and trial court leadership and court professionals through our committees. And, of course, I'd like to acknowledge Shelley and Rob, Erica and now Francine who is joining the team, too. I think she's here.

>> I'm here.

>> Thank you, Francine. And their teams including Cory and Zlatko. I think they all deserve a round of applause, too. [Applause.] And Shelley will have more detailed information to share on the budget during her report, and we'll also address the important processes of allocation and budget change proposals later during our discussion agenda.

>> I also want to acknowledge staff members who are here. We have a full, packed room in the back, from the Orange County Superior Court joining us in the audience today as part of their level-up leadership development program, our Court Executive Officer David Yamasaki. I think they're here. Yes, there they are. We have also present and welcome a court interpreter manager. We have Beatrice Ademis, in the criminal division, Lori Mayes, Rose Marie Garcia, deputy court operations, criminal division, and Teresa Chen, financial services manager. I had an opportunity to meet them all yesterday, and we appreciate you being here with us today. Thank you. [Applause.]

>> Okay. You now invite our two Judicial Council members beginning their term to join me in taking your oath of office. Please stand. Okay. You're both together. You will repeat "I do" after me if you do, and I hope that you do. I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California against all enemies foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California, that I take this

obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties upon which I'm about to enter.

>> I do.

>> I do.

>> Yay. [Applause.]

>> Okay. I was holding my breath. Thank you. I'm really looking forward to working with you guys. Thank you. We will now begin our public comment period. We welcome public comments and appreciate the time and effort that members of the public take to provide them both in writing and in person. All comments are noted and on specific agenda items or on one of the general topics of judicial administration, they all help us to better understand the issues that Californians face when accessing our court system. When further consideration or response is warranted, we do follow up appropriately. However, it's important to note that council members cannot intervene on behalf of any individual or with respect to any case or offer legal advice to anyone. I'll now turn it over to the council's Executive and Planning Committee chair, Administrative Presiding Justice Brad Hill to begin public comment.

>> Thank you very much, Chief. It's nice to have everyone with us today. We have a number who have joined us in person. We thank you very much for taking the time to be with us. I would note when you do approach to speak, that you should state your name, and if applicable, your title and affiliation. On the podium are lights that will inform you of the time remaining. A yellow light will come on when you have one minute remaining and a red light will come on when your time has expired. And we'll turn first to Nick, to speak to court administration. And if you wouldn't mind stepping forward.

>> Good morning.

>> Good morning.

>> Honorable members of California Judicial Council, thank you for having me. Highly appreciate it. Civil engineer, civil rights activist, Orange County. For 700 days I cannot get a signature on stipulation for retirement with the state. This add ministerial duty cleared by all parties of interest, child support services, pending action in district court against Governor Newsom. Looking for relief, punitive and damages of multimillion dollars, a legal precedent of Jean E. Carroll and President Trump. Pending since August 19, '24. For parties two motions for challenge. Motion to stop any hearing, with the Appellate District, petition for review with California Supreme Court, late, unfortunately, with U.S. Supreme Court. Complaints to commission and judicial performance to judiciary who sent me here to U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts to join legislation to presiding judges and court CEOs, complaints to Governor Newsom and was submitted January 2023. On February 18, he stated that he's going

to produce an order and ask to prepare the file. On February 27, he overruled himself and denied it. Both yes and no documented in certified court transcripts.

>> You might note that the red light has come on, so if you wouldn't mind, perhaps wrapping things up.

>> Yes. My question to all mentioned places and to honorable council here is why the judges were not suspended after the order for more than six months, both of them. If they committed perjury in their 90-day pending cases, Government Code 68210, obviously they violated judicial 3 b7 and article 6 paragraph 19. Presiding Judge Maria Hernandez felt California Rules of Court 10608 and 10608, too. I can answer any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

>> Thank you for joining us this morning, and we now have 22 others behind you, so we'll thank and excuse you at this point. We have some interpreters with us. Again, thank you for joining us. We appreciate. We know that it's not easy to take time and come here to join us. We understand that three of you will be speaking for three minutes apiece and then the others will be indicating their support for what has been said. And we'll turn first to Jean Carasia. I may not have done justice to your name.

>> Good morning.

>> Thank you for joining us.

>> You're welcome. Good morning, Chief Justice and council members. My name is Jean, I'm a staff interpreter at San Francisco Superior Court. Over the past decade region two have lost 42% of their staff interpreters with many returning as contractors earning double or even triple of what staff interpreters make. We do not have a stable interpreter workforce right now. Because of this, the region two courts do not always meet the mandate of providing equal access for all languages. Those of us on the ground see unequal treatment for court users needing our services, unreasonable delays for attorneys and judges, and people denied the right to be heard. We see this daily. For decades, the Judicial Council of California has been setting language access standards to ensure equal access to justice, aspirational policy directives won't translate into access without a commitment to workforce recruitment and retention. With long-term, unfilled vacancies and high attrition, some court administrators propose cutting the certification process pass score another 10% down to 60%. Make no mistake, 60% is a failing grade for anything that matters. Imagine yourself in a court proceeding in a foreign language getting maybe six out of ten words being spoken. Would you call that due process? High standards for certification is the right policy. Lowering standards is not a workforce solution. For complete, accurate, real-time interpreting of complex matters, which is necessary for language access, the courts need interpreters who are knowledgeable, skilled, and dedicated. How can the courts meet this need while also refusing to set a competitive salary for staff interpreters? Thank you.

>> Thank you very much. Next up we have Laura Villanueva, if you wouldn't mind stepping forward. Good morning.

>> Good morning, honorable council members. My name is Laura Villanueva. I'm a staff interpreter at San Francisco Superior Court and have been a California court interpreter for 11 years. The courts have been neglecting compensation for decades. Courts in the most expensive region of the state are facing daily staffing shortages and persistent vacancies that go unfilled for years. This leaves immigrants without interpreters, harms language access, and undermines civil rights. Staff and contract interpreters have the same skills and provide the same service, but staff interpreters work longer hours under less favorable working conditions and earn far less than our contractor colleagues. Even after accounting for the cost of benefits, which not all employees get, we still make 50 to 60% less. Paying contractors less is no solution. Paying staff more is. The disparate treatment is extreme. What makes us different and unequal? How can the region two courts justify paying us less than federal court interpreters, less than court reporters, and so much less than contract interpreters doing the same job? If the courts keep neglecting the interpreter workforce and suppressing staff pay, what's behind the unequal treatment? Is it because our services are legally mandated but unfunded? Is it because the courts don't value public service for immigrants? Is it because most interpreters are women? Very many of us are immigrants. How do you explain the stark disparities in pay and treatment for an essential workforce? Thank you.

>> Thank you very much. Michelle, if you wouldn't mind stepping forward at this time.

>> Good morning, honorable council members, and you said my last name right, which is very unusual. My name is Michelle and I'm a staff interpreter for Alameda County Superior Court and I've been a certified court interpreter for 25 years. Eight of those I was also an interpreter services manager. And for several of those I was also the court language access liaison to the Judicial Council. Interpreting over Zoom does not provide equal and meaningful access for LEP court users except for very basic communications. Ad hoc solutions for remote appearances don't work for interpreting. Poor sound, inadequate tech, and the lack of enforceable standards of current systems leave access buffering. Remote interpreting isolates LEP users and impedes their participation, and it puts interpreter hearing at risk. Tech without specs is not a workforce solution. The interpreter act was enacted in 2003. The law envisioned a finite transition period to shift from contract interpreter services to an employment system. Stable workforce doesn't happen overnight. But after 23 years, growing disparities in pay and treatment reflect the failure of the California courts to implement the law's intent and purpose. Deliver on the law's mandate to provide quality language access services to all LEP court users and the skilled and reliable workforce. Thank you.

>> Thank you very much. At this time I'm going to call three at a time and then you can certainly register your support or anything else with respect to those comments. Naomi, Carol

and Ryan, step forward, please. And then in the queue, if you wouldn't mind, we'll have Molly Smith and Maria Delcarmen Munoz, if you could get ready to approach. Thank you.

>> Hi, I'm Naomi Adelson, a staff interpreter at San Francisco County Superior Court and I've been a court interpreter for 18 years, dedicated to public service. I support everything that my colleagues said and really hope you fund the mandate. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Hello, Carol, court certified interpreter for San Mateo County Superior Court. I've been a court interpreter for 27 years, started in 1999 for Alameda County, worked in Santa Clara County, San Francisco County and San Mateo County for close to 20 years. I've also been on the court interpreter Judicial Council advisory panel, and I do support everything that my colleagues just stated. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning, honorable council members. My name is Ryan Lee, an interpreter working with Santa Clara County in the last five years, and I support and endorse everything been said so far by my colleagues. Thank you.

>> Thank you. Now Molly Smith and Maria Munoz can step forward and in the queue we'll have Katie Van Zandt and Shannon.

>> Good morning, honorable council members. My name is Molly Smith, and I am a certified California state interpreter, and I have been a staff interpreter for 14 years with Contra Costa County and I support and endorse all the comments that have been made so far by my colleagues. Thank you.

>> Good morning. I work for San Mateo County. I've been a court interpreter since 2008. We worked through the pandemic, some of our colleagues lost their lives, and many of us got COVID several times. We're in the holding cells, we're in the court hearings, and it's disheartening to see the lack of pay parity. Thank you.

>> Good morning, honorable council members and Chief Justice. I'm a staff interpreter at San Francisco Superior Court. I have been a California court interpreter for 11 years, and I endorse and support everything my colleagues have said. Thank you for your time.

>> Thank you very much. And then in the queue I would ask that Brenda Oliver, Karla Cuevas and Jenny step forward and then we'll start. Go right ahead.

>> Good morning, Chief Justice and honorable council members. My name is Katie Van Sant, a Spanish court interpreter at the Alameda County Superior Court. I've been a court interpreter

for 25 years. I'm also on the Judicial Council Committee for Access and Fairness and the subcommittee for language access. I'm here to support my colleagues, and I endorse everything that they have said today. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning, honorable council members. My name is Francisco, and I'm a staff interpreter at Alameda Superior Court, and I have been a staff interpreter for 20 years. A recent survey of region two interpreters highlighted all the years of education it takes to do a job. 40% of staff members now depend on side jobs for extra income just to make end meet. I'm one of those interpreters. Thank you.

>> Thank you. I would ask Christian Guerrero and Margaret layman and Mary Lou, I really didn't do justice to that name.

>> I'm used to it.

>> Okay. Thank you. Please proceed.

>> Morning, Chief Justice. Morning honorable council members. I'm Shannon Raintree, a staff interpreter at San Francisco Superior Court, a certified interpreter for 25 years and a staff interpreter for 19 of those years I support and endorse everything my colleagues have said. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Chief Justice, honorable council members, good morning. My name is Carla Vuevas. I'm a staff interpreter and I have been a court interpreter for 15 years. I'm dedicated to public service. I'm here today because staff interpreters are underpaid by any measure. In the most expensive region in the fourth largest economy in the world, why are we seeing such low income? Thank you.

>> Good morning, Chief Justice and council members. My name is Brenda Oliver. I've been a court interpreter for 27 years, and I echo the comments of my colleagues. And just an example of the shortage in pay, I have to rely on credit cards to buy my basic groceries. Think about that. Thank you.

>> Thank you. We would ask Danielle Navarro and Benjamin Young to get in the queue. Please proceed.

>> Good morning, council members, Honorable Chief Justice. My name is Jenny Foray, a court interpreter here in California for over 17 years, 15 years I served in Los Angeles County. I'm currently employed as a staff interpreter in Sonoma County courts. Madam Chief Justice, thank

you for coming to our inauguration. We are open for service officially on Monday. I want to thank you for your time, and I just want to say that I fully endorse and support what my colleagues are here to say personally and anything that has been submitted in written comment. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning, Honorable Chief Justice and committee members, council members, I've been a certified California court interpreter for ten years, seven of which I worked as a staff interpreter in Sonoma County and three point at Marin County and I support and endorse the comments made by my colleagues and friends. Thank you.

>> Good morning, honorable council members. My name is Margaret Layman. I've been a staff interpreter for more than 18 years, and I strongly endorse and support everything my colleagues have said, and I just wanted to mention that I am also one of these interpreters who is living paycheck to paycheck despite working full time. And I love my job too much to quit it, but I'm not sure how much longer I can afford to do it. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning. I'm Mary Lou. I've served the courts for over 34 years as a contract interpreter and as a staff interpreter for Alameda County since 2003. I've worked in courts all over the state of California at different times, and I just want to say that most of the folks that you're hearing from today have masters degrees. Many are federally certified and we truly are low income under the definition for low income in the Bay Area. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning, Chief Justice. Good morning, council members. My name is Daniel Navarro. I'm a Spanish interpreter at San Francisco Superior Court and have been for 25 years. I want to echo the comments of my colleagues, and I think what they've said is a testament to our dedication to public service. I would encourage you to read the comments submitted on behalf of our labor union, thank you.

>> Hello. My name is Benjamin Young. I am a court certified interpreter for over 25 years in San Mateo County. I have worked as a contractor and staff interpreter, so I know the disparity. And, also, I'm getting old and I'm going to be retiring soon, and at this really think a way should be found to replace people like us and endorse the comments of my colleagues. Thank you.

>> Thank you very much. Now that is the group that checked in, but I see a couple folks here that may have gotten here a tad late and didn't check in and we'll certainly want to hear from them as well. So please step forward.

>> Good morning, honorable council members. Thank you for your time this morning. I traveled here all the way from Monterey County, and that is why I am a bit late. I apologize. I have been a certified Spanish court interpreter for the past 20 years, 19 of those years I have been a staff interpreter in Monterey County and I just wanted to mention we provide essential Constitutionally mandated services, and I urge you to provide equal pay for equal work that we've been providing as dedicated public servants for the past couple of decades. Thank you.

>> Thank you. No apology necessary. And thank you for making the trip.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning, honorable council members. My name is Farrah Taylor. I have been a court certified interpreter since 2009. I worked as a private contractor for many years, and I've been an employee at Marin County Superior Court since 2017. I endorse all the comments that my colleagues have made, and I would also like to point out that I am well aware of the disparity between what contract interpreters make versus what employees make, and I truly believe that as civil servants, I come from a long line of civil servants. It's unfortunate that court interpreters are so low on the pay scale compared to other people who work in public service, and we are providing such a really important service, and I hope you realize that and are aware of it. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning, Chief Justice and council members. My name is Jack Medina. I work for Marin Superior Court and have been a court interpreter for 20 years. I endorse and support everything that my colleagues have said before me. Also, I'd like to point out that some full-time interpreter positions have been announced and candidates have called to apply and have not gotten callbacks. Thank you very much. Have a great day.

>> Thank you.

>> Good morning. My name is Tatiana and I'm certified Russian interpreter for the County of San Francisco. I endorse and full heartedly support my colleagues and very proud to be of a group of wonderful, well-educated and brave people. Thank you.

>> Thank you. I want to thank all of you for your thoughtful and very important comments. Obviously court interpreters are a critical part of our system and we appreciate you taking your time to share your thoughts with us. Chief, that concludes public comment.

>> Thank you, Justice Hill. Thank you to everybody who took the time to provide these public comments, whether it related to, as our first speaker, an individual issue, or more broadly language access issues, something we're committed to. We thank you for work that you do, the

comments today and all the comments we received in writing. That concludes our public comment period. Thank you.

>> Next on our agenda is my regular report as Chief Justice summarizing some of my engagements and ongoing outreach activities on behalf of the judicial branch since our last meeting on April 24th. As part of my Power of Democracy Civic Learning Initiative, we commemorated law day, as you know, on May 1st at the Third District Court of Appeal in Sacramento where we welcomed judges, educators, students and their parents to a program recognizing the rule of law and its role in our democracy. We also took the opportunity to announce our 2026 Civic Learning Award honorees at the event and presented the Civic Learning Award of Excellence, which is the top honor, to three schools. Prep elementary school, South Junior High School in Orange County, and Norwalk High School in LA County. I look forward to visiting these campuses. I do each year in the fall. In another major celebration of civics, I gave keynote remarks at an event celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of our country. It was held on the USS Midway. Joan Webber was the principle organizer. Justice Judith McConnell of the Fourth District Court of Appeal and the chair of my initiative attended the event alongside numerous judges in San Diego Superior Court and also our federal courts. It was really a wonderful opportunity to engage with the community and highlight the importance of our founding principles and the work of our independent judiciary in upholding the rule of law. Turning to judicial appointments, we had five justices who were unanimously confirmed by the commission on judicial appointments, which I chair. During hearings in May. The hearings resulted in the confirmations of Justice Steven Govovic, Division Three in Los Angeles, Presiding Justice Joanne Muduwiki with the Fourth District Court of Appeal, Division Three in Santa Ana, Justice Deborah Sorvino with the Fourth District court, Justice Aaron Bermudez in San Diego and Justice Amy Gara in Fresno. You're welcome, Justice Hill. I also had the pleasure of welcoming four groups of new judges to my chambers during our New Judge Orientation program. In total we had 25 judges, 24 commissioners and one hearing officer representing 20 different counties. In San Francisco I attended the American Bar Association opportunity program where I spoke to law students who were selected for a six-week summer internship to do legal work in writing work with our federal and state court judges. And I always make a pitch for the state side of that equation. I spoke for high school students from several counties attending the young legislators program hosted by Senator Caballero. As part of the program dedicated to fostering civic engagement and leadership among Central Valley youth. I participated in a Q&A session regarding the work of our courts and my role and responsibilities as Chief Justice. I also helped send off graduates from our judicial fellows, the Judicial Fellowship Program during their end of year ceremony held in Sacramento after they spent ten months working in either our Judicial Council offices or with one of seven of our superior courts throughout the state under the mentorship of our court executive officers and professional staff. We thank our fellows for their contributions to our branch. We also hope it's inspired them to commit to continue public service as many of our fellows have done over the years. Also in Sacramento earlier this week, I participated in a very lively Q&A session, very lively because it was moderated by Justice Macy Wala and Presiding Justice Earl. There were about 60 participants, externs and law students who asked questions.

I'm very grateful for the time they take and invest to help build the pipeline of our future lawyers and judges. In Santa Rosa, Shelley and I were pleased to attend a dedication for one of our new courthouses. It was a lovely gathering to honor the justice for Sonoma County. In San Francisco I was honored to speak at a reception for the Glide Foundation and legal services they provide to vulnerable communities through their legal advice and referral clinic. This was actually an initiative that Judge Crompton spearheaded prior to joining the San Francisco Superior Court, so we also thank him for his tireless work in improving the civil justice gap. Finally, in Sacramento I was pleased to join Governor Newsom, Attorney General Rob Bonta at the annual peace officers memorial. It recognizes peace officers who died in the line of duty the previous year. As you know, our courthouses could not function without the work of our bailiffs, sheriffs, CHP, marshals and others to access our justice system and allows judicial officers and court employees to do our jobs without fearing for our safety. As always, it was a somber and moving tribute to peace officers who paid the ultimate sacrifice in order to protect the public and an important recognition to honor the families. In particular this year there were numerous children who were impacted by the loss of their loved ones, so I appreciate the opportunity to be there with them and that concludes my remarks to the council of my activities since our past meeting. We now will hear from our Administrative Director, Shelley Curran, with her report to all of you.

>> Good morning. Thank you, everyone. Thank you, Chief. I would like to begin this morning by asking to call your attention to my regular written Administrative Director's report in your material. It represents a roundup of the work that the council staff has undertaken since the April business meeting in support of the council's mission. It's separate and apart from the matters that are on today's agenda. So I'm going to begin, of course, with the discussion of the budget. The report notes that a new budget for fiscal year began on July 1st. For today's meeting, we are presenting for your consideration an approval recommended budgetary allocations for the fiscal year '26-27 and we're seeking your approval for budget change proposals for the following year, fiscal year '27-28 for submission to the Department of Finance. I want to echo the Chief Justice's appreciation to council members and court leaders for the advocacy that you did over the course of the last several months to advance our issues before the Legislature and the Governor's administration. It makes a very big difference in the work that we do. Good news for our state, the final budget agreement between the legislature and legislative leaders and Governor Newsom balances California's budget for the current fiscal year now, so for '26-27 and also next year for fiscal year '27-28. When the Governor's Budget was released in January, the state was projecting deficits of \$26 billion for fiscal year '27-28 and \$22 billion for fiscal year '28-29. Those estimates are now reduced to \$10 billion and \$8 billion respectively. In addition to state budget reserves also being in better shape, better than being anticipated, these reserves hopefully will put us in a better position when it comes to budget stability and, frankly, predictability as we look to the future. Also, positively, the final budget reflects investments for the judicial branch beyond what the Governor had included in his initial May revision. It includes \$70 million for trial court operations, \$20 million each in the next two fiscal years to address rising court interpreter costs, and \$11 million ongoing for court-appointed counsel programs in the Supreme Court and the Courts of Appeal. Additionally,

they've included \$1.9 billion for a comprehensive including \$150 million, much-needed dollars, I should say, for deferred maintenance in our court facilities. Also included is about \$100 million to begin funding 13 new judgeships over the course of the next five fiscal years, and \$30 million one time to continue implementation of Proposition 36, and increase dollars for pretrial programs. Also on the budget front, they included a recommendation and ultimately a decision to extend the ability for courts to conduct remote proceedings with the consent and the agreement and at the request of parties to a matter, so that was also a big priority for us, and that has been included until 2032. As you consider today's allocations and new budget change proposals for '26-27 and '28 budget, the budget released in January is going to be the first budget for our next Governor, so a lot of work will commence over the coming months to educate the incoming administration about branch functions and certainly branch priorities. So a lot to follow on that. We're also going to continue to monitor actions that are happening at the federal level and also economic conditions that will certainly impact the state. Also in today's written report under the role of advisory activities, you'll note repeated references to spring cycle of public comment on rules and forums proposals. They were prepared by six different advisory committees, many driven by legislative requirements, and they were posted for public comment during our spring cycle. These proposals will include a total of 176 forms, 167 are proposed new or revised forms, and nine existing forms proposed for revocation. On the rules side there are 71 new rules proposals, 65 proposed new or revised rules one appendix to the rules as well as five existing rules proposed for repeal. Proposals range from new probate rules, joint guardianship appointments and implementation of AB 747 on combatting fraudulent practices related to civil process servers. A total of 320 comments were provided on the different proposals during the spring cycle alone. That public comment process is central to ensuring the full and fair consideration of potential issues relating to the proposed rules and forms and can be really helpful to the advisory committees as they are working on developing those forums and ultimately to you as you consider adopting those changes. This public comment process generally not only for the rules and forums but budget allocations, our funding methodology, our legislative proposals, any number of things that come before the council and, frankly, our work at meetings helps to ensure that our work reflects the various interests of various stakeholders throughout the state. Ultimately I think it helps us provide better service to the public, so we really appreciate all of the public comments that are made and all of the work that we do. And I also really want to do a shoutout, now that I've gone through all of that, that laundry list of things accomplished to the members of the council who serve on our Rules Committee chaired by Judge Wood and all of you for the immense amount of work that you do on that. So thank you. Turning to a different topic. In early June, you all received an announcement about our chief operating officer for the council. I want to take this opportunity to formally recognize and thank Francine Byrne who joined. Francine is known by, I think probably, all of you, and has worked with you in her over two decades of work at the council. Her work at the council has really been focused on research. She was part of our original office of court research. She worked at the center for the court in the last five years has been the director over our Criminal Justice Services office. As chief operating officer, Francine will be responsible, her portfolio will include Criminal Justice Services, Center for Judicial Education and Resources, Center for Family, Children & the Courts and IT. I am appreciative,

happy, grateful that she's joined our executive team and know that she's going to continue to excel in her contributions to the council and to all of you and ultimately the public. Finally, as the Chief mentioned, we had the opportunity to mark the completion and attend a courthouse dedication. During this time period, we had three different openings. One was in April for the new Sacramento courthouse named after former Chief Justice, an 18-story, 53-room courthouse. It opened for business in April. A dedication, as the Chief mentioned, for the 15 courtroom courthouse in Santa Rosa for Sonoma County and then also down south we had the rededication then a newly expanded space and for the juvenile dependency courthouse in San Bernardino expanding the number of courtrooms from four to six. To conclude my remarks today, I'm going to quote from something that that judge from Sonoma said during that courthouse dedication that really resonated for me, and I think it is important for us to keep in mind as we work on these projects and advocate to others about the importance of our capital outlay program. So I'm going to borrow from him for two minutes. Too often litigants and members of the public entering members courthouse can feel intimidated or overwhelmed. Many individuals arrive with fear, stress, grief, conflict, and uncertainty. This building was thoughtfully designed to help ease those emotions. Its natural light, grand, open spaces on the first floor, magnificent views from the higher floors, the jury rotunda, and overall architectural splendor send a powerful message. The judicial branch is a unique, revered, special institution, and this is a place where people should feel respected, heard, and safe. The beauty of this courthouse is not merely aesthetic. It serves a deeper purpose. Thoughtful architecture can inspire calm, dignity and confidence. It can remind visitors that justice is not cold or distant but human. The details of this building reflect the belief that public institutions should uplift the communities they serve. That concludes my remarks, Chief.

>> Thank you. Thank you for your report and thank you for those remarks. I thought were very powerful and really captured the importance of the funding requests that we make for the dedication to occur. Next we'll move on to the Consent Agenda. We have 16 items that are on our agenda today. The council's Executive and Planning Committee, as you know, worked really hard to identify those matters in order to optimize the best use of our time during the council meeting, but I'd just like to remind everybody, and we have new members, so I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that anyone really can move an item from the consent to the discussion agenda if you believe it would benefit for us to have further deliberation and discussion on this item. As always, we appreciate the many hours of work that are put in by our advisory committees and our council staff. That have enabled these recommendations to come before us for our consideration. At this time I'd like to ask members if there are any comments or questions before I entertain a motion to move the Consent Agenda items.

>> Chief, I'd like to make a comment. Thank you. Before the council considers the Consent Agenda before us today, I would like to highlight the civil council act, item NEM 26-033 on the Consent Agenda and share my support for the recommendation for continued funding of the projects for the 2026-2029 grant cycle. As you might recall, the Shriver program is California it's commitment to ensuring meaningful access to justice for low-income litigants facing issues that affect basic needs. In my superior court we participated since the program's inception in

2011. Shriver funded attorneys are essential in helping self-represented litigants navigate evolving eviction procedures, rental assistance programs and plex housing laws. We have legal assistants who help parties every day with these issues. Our partnership with the greater Bakersfield legal assistance program produced strong results. About one-third of clients remain housed and many others resolve cases in ways that lessen long-term consequences such as sealing records, protecting credit or securing time to find alternative housing. The funding provides for mediation services that most recently resulted in an agreement rate of 71%, solving those cases without court hearings. I appreciate the extensive work of our Judicial Council staff, our legal services partners, and courts statewide who provide act funding. I respectfully support the recommendation before our council today and ask that you all do the same. Thank you.

>> Thank you for your comments. I'll take that as a motion to move approval.

>> That would be a motion for approval for the Consent Agenda.

>> Is there a second?

>> Moorman seconds.

>> Thank you, Judge Moorman. All of those in favor say aye. Any nos? Any abstentions? Thank you. The Consent Agenda is approved. We have four items on the discussion agenda, the first consideration allocations for trial court operations for fiscal year 2026-2027, item 26-041 in your agenda. We welcome our presenters, Judge Jonathan Conklin, retired now, right? Congratulations. That's why he's smiling. Chair of the Trial Court Advisory. Welcome.

>> Good morning, Chief, and council members. So nice to see all of you. Thank you very much for the opportunity this morning to present the preliminary allocations to the trial courts for the fiscal year '26-27 on behalf of the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee. Each of those members, I thank for their exceptional work. We have a slide presentation for you this morning. I assure you, it will be brief and on time. This budget allocation controlled by an agenda item 2641 for the trial court operations of '26-27. Per state law, that is Government Code 68502.3, the Judicial Council is required to make these preliminary allocations to the trial courts in July of each fiscal year. The final allocations which incorporate year-end adjustments must be completed by January of each year, and the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee will bring those final allocations back to you at your December meeting for your anticipated approval. These allocations are the primary funding source for the trial courts and are essential to support the court operations and sustain critical programs and services for court users and the public. They may help us maintain a skilled and experienced court workforce to deliver those services, and they protect and expand access to justice for all Californians. The total preliminary allocations for the Trial Court Trust Fund and General Fund for fiscal year '26-27, which, as was mentioned, we just started, are \$3.2 billion, based on the recommended and previously approved methodologies from this council. Of this amount \$3.1 billion comes from the Trial Court Trust Fund and \$117.8 million comes from the General Fund to support trial court

operations. Once approved by this council, these funds are allocated to the courts in monthly distributions. The fiscal year '26-27 budget includes additional funding for the trial courts including \$70 million to help those courts address rising operational costs and to mitigate potential reductions to court programs and services due to the impact of inflation. \$23.3 million for the trial court employee health benefit and retirement cost increases. As a reminder, the state budget process adjusts funding levels each year to reflect those actual benefit cost changes. And, as previously mentioned as well, a \$20 million annual increase for court interpreters for each of the next two years. This additional funding will help address the rising costs it have court interpreter services and support critical program needs to ensure language access in all of our courts. The workload funding policy separate from the calculation of court allocations applies the Judicial Council's weighted caseload study. Appropriate for programs that rely on the workload funding on determined workload, the approved calculations will be applied. The Workload Formula policy promotes funding, equity, stability and predictability. The workload funding methodology with calculated funding need, which represents how much funding the trial courts need based upon their workload. And the need is then updated annually to incorporate the most current information including filings, salaries, benefits, operating expenditures and equipment, bureau of labor statistics data and court executive officers. An important note for this is that the fiscal year '26-27 need calculation now reflects the updates to the 2024 case workload, case weight. Those were updated in 2024 and approved by the council at the business meeting. Last year, as you will all remember, the council deferred implementation of those 2024 case weights until this fiscal year, '26-27. That allowed sufficient time to understand the reason for the changes and to compare the 2024 case weights to the prior 2017 case weights and evaluate their impact on trial court funding. Using those new case weights the funding needed for the fiscal year '26-27 is \$3.26 billion. Based on the funding included in the enacted budget as well as local trial court revenues, available for this year, is \$2.7 billion. Comparing the calculated funding need to the available funding, the statewide average funding level for the trial courts is now 73% of their workload need as identified through the Workload Formula policy calculation. So, in conclusion, the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee has two recommendations for your consideration and recommended approval today. First, to approve total allocations of \$3.2 billion from the Trial Court Trust Fund and General Fund including base, discretionary and nondiscretionary program funding. These allocations are based on recommended and previously approved methodologies and subject to technical adjustments in funding included in the final enacted budget for this fiscal year '26-27. Additionally, we recommend you approve application of the workload funding methodology previously mentioned which will result in a statewide average funding level of 73% and that concludes this presentation. We are both available for any questions you may have. Otherwise we move for approval.

>> Any questions for our presenters? No? No questions? I'll provide a comment and thank you, again, for all the wonderful work that you continue to do. The funding that we seek every year is critical to our operations. There's a lot of thought and hard work and it goes into ensuring that the funds that we provide are allocated in a fair way so that our courts can provide access to justice. We really appreciate your ongoing work during your retirement even. Thank you.

>> I would move approval with thanks to Judge Conklin for his incredible service as Chair. I think this might be your final report as Chair. And, I tell you, what you have meant to our branch and what you have done and cobbling agreement between our courts time and time again and the legacy of service that you have provided has been extraordinary and we thank you.

>> Appreciate it. Thank you very much.

>> I was hoping you would stay on. I didn't have the heart to say out loud it would be your last time. I'm still in denial.

>> If I could ask for ten seconds to acknowledge the work of this council and just I've been in the cat bird seat and watched the work they've done, beyond measure. And I just wanted to thank them very much from Zlatko and staff for getting us through the time helping me look like I knew what I was doing, and I would be remiss if I didn't leave with my final comment of, go Dodgers.

>> Thank you.

>> Chief, I'll second the motion.

>> Thank you. So Judge Moorman seconds it. Is there any further discussion? Okay, at this time all of those in favor please say aye. Any nos? Any abstentions? Thank you. This item is approved. Our second agenda item relates to the judicial branch five-year Infrastructure Plan and capital outlay budget change proposals for the same fiscal year, 2027-28. Item 26-104 in your agenda. We welcome our presenters, Administrative Presiding Justice Brad Hill, who is also the chair of the Court Facilities Advisory Committee. Judge Eric Wersching, vice-chair of the Court Facilities Advisory Committee, also our new member, and we welcome Mr. Jagan Singh as well from Judicial Council facilities services and Mr. Magnusson from Facilities Services. Welcome.

>> Good morning, Chief, and fellow members of the council. The report that we were planning to present to you today changed rather dramatically about two weeks ago, and we couldn't be more pleased. The final budget announcement in June provided the following additions to our plans for this year and next. First, through a combination of appropriations from the General Fund and the public building's construction fund, an additional \$188 million for starting and completing all phases of the following four projects will be accomplished, Clear Lake, Tracy, Kern and Tahoe. And \$1.63 billion for completing all remaining phases of the following five projects, Solano, Nevada City, Plumas, Santa Clarita and San Luis Obispo. And for the following year control section 4.85 was included in the budget bill authorizing the use of up to 1.3 billion in '27-28 for the purpose of acquisitions, performance criteria and design build phases of construction for the following courthouses, Richmond, San Francisco, Santa Barbara,

Fresno, and the Orange County collaborative courthouse. This budget takes us right up to the next critically needed courthouse, in Los Angeles, a project that is vitally important. Los Angeles lost their last courthouse back in 1933 to an earthquake. It took 25 years to get a replacement, which was Mosk and they can't afford nor can we afford to lose another courthouse in Los Angeles. This increased funding just approved is a significant boost for the program, and we all thank the governor, the Department of Finance, the Legislature for shining a light on this critical need and helping all Californians in the process. We have long said this is not a matter of just building shiny new courthouses. This is all about providing safe and secure courthouses to communities across our state. Jurors, parties, court staff and others deserve safe courthouses. Courthouses that are ADA compliant and courthouses that will not be destroyed in an earthquake. Initially we'd like to talk just a bit about we've been, where we are right now, and our plans for the future. About 18 years ago we started controlling our own destiny with the passage of SB 1407. That legislation provided for the funding of courthouse construction through lease revenue bonds, \$5 billion worth, and our very own Shelley Curran was right in the middle of that working alongside Senator Prada to craft this historic bill. After that, a couple years later, we did have funding challenges where we lost and deferred about a billion and a half and had to tell a number of courthouses that were about ready to start that they had to put the brakes on. But all of us around this table and the Court Facilities committee and courthouses around the state persevered. And since that time, we have with the continuing commitment from the Governor, Legislature and others, we have General Fund funding for our program that provides the secured funding that we need from now into the future. Currently we have 17 projects ongoing around the state totaling \$1.8 billion. In construction currently, Lakeport, the juvenile family courthouse, Modesto, Ukiah. The process of prioritizing these courthouses is a long and rather arduous one that has a very detailed criteria. At the start of a process, when we're initially prioritizing all of these courthouses, we were looking at courthouses around the state most of which were in dire need of replacement. So ranking became a process of determining the most dire needs and working our way through balance. Our rating and ranking criteria looks at detailed factors like and we'll name just a few of those seismic. Now you'll see the San Diego new courthouse. The old courthouse sat directly on an earthquake fault, and I remember talking to and seeing courtrooms in San Diego that had cracks going along the walls, and judges were pointing out that it was just a matter of time before that courthouse collapsed. Sacramento was in a similar circumstance, and there's the new Sacramento courthouse that we have now. Other factors that we look at include the facility condition index, the fire and life safety index, security factors, ADA compliance, access to court services, and cost per project per court users and this accounts for large population areas that are stressed by the number of court users, i.e., Los Angeles. This overall ranking criteria relies on these quantitative measures and takes politics out of the process. Outside consultants give us detailed reports as to each factor at each and every courthouse. In addition, every meeting of the Court Facilities Advisory Committee and every discussion of project ranking is on the record and open to the public and the public weighs in at each and every meeting. In other words, there are no secrets and no surprises. We believe it is our core mission to build courthouses that will stand the test of time. But they have to be built economically. In our very first year as a committee, we formed the courthouse cost reduction subcommittee. Every courthouse project goes through this

committee, and it is a rigorous process. One example of what this committee did a while back is each time a courthouse would be built previously by DGS and others before that, an architect would design all of the courtrooms from scratch at each courthouse costing millions of dollars in architectural fees. We have now developed a book of templates, over 20 of them, so that courts can pick and choose from standardized and previously designed and approved courtroom layouts. The courts across the state have chosen and liked and, obviously, the new courthouse projects can rely upon those time-tested models. We save money in the process. We save time in the process and a lot of aggravation. Our goal is to be good stewards of the public's money. And to demonstrate courthouse by courthouse that we are deserving of the Governor's and Legislature's trust to spend every penny wisely. I'm now pleased to introduce the vice-chair of the Court Facilities Advisory Committee, Judge Eric Wersching.

>> Thank you very much, Justice Hill. Good morning, Chief Justice, and members of the council. In your materials for today's meeting is a recommendation from the Court Facilities Advisory Committee, CFAC, the proposed five-year plan for construction of new courthouses as well as a capital outlay budget change proposal for fiscal year 2027-28. We're asking for that recommendation to be approved and for staff to be directed to make the applicable submissions to the Department of Finance. Justice Hill spoke of many of the exciting recent developments on this facility front with respect to the budget. In order to provide you with a little more context for the work that that CFAC has done to facilitate the building of dignified, economical courthouses throughout the state and to develop and to recommend the present five-year plan, we think it's important to highlight several of CFAC's considerations and actions. First, as to the standards Justice Hill spoke to. On the building of courthouses, Justice Hill described standards that CFAC has developed. Every three years CFAC's standards working group meticulously considers literally hundreds of pages of standards, revising them and updating them. The standards are detailed but appropriately flexible. They form the basis of construction bid documents and provide the use of a variety of templates to fit the needs of specific courthouses and courtrooms. They also alleviate the time and the expense that in the past was used designing and building courthouses from scratch. In other words, we no longer build bespoke courthouses but, instead, build courthouses from standards and a selection of templates that best meets the needs of the community. Justice Hill referenced the cost reduction subcommittee. CFAC is interested in, and we know the council is as well, being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. We ran into a challenge, though. Small courthouses cost more per square foot to build than large projects. This reduced competitiveness for state funding and potentially left communities in outdated, unsafe facilities. It's an economies of scale issue. To that end, the cost reduction committee of CFAC looked to the standards we just discussed to provide a path to cut costs. We have used those standards and reduced the size of many courthouses allowing us to avoid using excess square footage that dries up the cost of construction. Most recently the cost reduction subcommittee reduced building sizes for the San Joaquin, Tracy, and Plumas projects. You can see the results of the subcommittee's work. It makes smaller courthouse projects viable and dignified because we're using our standards where those courthouses were previously not cost competitive. Those recommendations were advanced and approved at a savings of tens of millions of dollars. But we're not just building cookie cutter courthouses as a

result of these processes. For instance, the Falasco Justice Center was a courthouse that was built at a 30% cost savings and utilized tilt-up construction similar to that used in private construction of Target and Costco stores. Combined with our standards is very dignified. Other examples of us not building cookie cutter courthouses include the EL Centro courthouse which the Chief attended the dedication of on your screen. We have the Yreka courthouse. We have the Sonora courthouse and the Santa Rosa courthouse that we just heard about today and the dedication that you two attended. So more economical and efficient does not equate to less dignified. But in addition to CFAC working on replacing aging courthouses with seismically safe structures, defining standards for courthouses and examining cost cutting where appropriate, CFAC also looks very closely at deferred maintenance and facility modification costs when recommending its five-year plan that's before you. In many respects, deferred maintenance and facility modification expenses are the hidden costs of aging buildings because dollars that we spend on aging obsolete buildings are dollars not invested in new purpose-built courthouses. We have an estimated \$5.37 billion in estimated deferred maintenance costs which approximately \$3.96 billion is the branch's Chair. New construction, however, by contrast, 50-plus years of service life and dramatically reduces the long-term maintenance burden on the state and on the branch. At CFAC we're very much aware of these deferred maintenance hidden expenses when recommending the five-year plan before you. As is set forth in your materials, the five-year plan includes 17 courthouses, projects for construction, and they're up on the slide, very small, in front of you. But you have them in your material. But please remember as Justice Hill mentioned, up until about two weeks ago, this five-year plan included many other courthouses. They're no longer part of that five-year plan because of the budget. Those projects that are not on this five-year plan because they've been fully funded through the budget, include Clearlake, Tracy, Kern, Nevada city, Plumas, Santa Clarita and San Luis Obispo. Before moving on to the action item, we'd be remiss if we did not thank our dedicated, hard-working, very competent Judicial Council staff. They provide us with such wonderful guidance on a daily basis and, really, we couldn't do the work without them and make these recommendations without their tremendous insight. And I know that we just have two of them here but it is a team that stands behind everything that our CFAC committee does. And I have the privilege of being able to address you today, but it really is the work of all of the CFAC committee members as well that have contributed to this five-year plan including Judge Kelly, Justice Hill as well. With that, CFAC recommends approval of its proposed five-year plan and the capital outlay budget change proposal and staff be directed to make their submission to the Department of Finance. We're prepared to answer any questions.

>> Thank you for your presentation, for such a thorough and thoughtful plan that you've put before us to consider and for helping us be good stewards with the money that we receive. We appreciate all the hard work and the teamwork that went into the proposal. Are there any comments or questions? I'll entertain a motion for movement of approval of this agenda item.

>> I'll move.

>> Thank you.

>> I'll second, Chief.

>> Thank you, Justice Boulware Eurie and Justice Corrigan. All those in favor please say aye. Any nos or abstentions? This item is approved, thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Good job.

>> For our third item, we will consider our IT modernization funding for 2026-27, item 26-107 in your materials. We welcome our presenters Judge Maria Hernandez, chair of the Technology Committee and Mr. David Slayton, vice-chair of the Technology Committee.

>> Good morning. Thank you, Chief. We are pleased and, again, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share with you this morning the IT project grant for fiscal year '26-27. I'm pleased to be joined by our vice-chair, Mr. David Slayton, the CEO from Los Angeles County. We're going to try to get through this and get everybody out on time. I'm going to move to what we intend to cover here this morning. I'll start with an overview of the IT mod guiding principles and will turn it over to David to share the new funding methodology including the focus on collaborative efforts amongst all the courts. We'll close by highlighting the impacts of this important grant project for the courts and also requesting your approval. First of all, going to the guiding principles. It's important, and I know you've heard from us before, but IT modernization grant funding has remained consistent over the many years. These principles include a commitment to promote innovation through technology. This year's funding priorities were informed by court technology assessments and surveys that identified the top five priorities and funding needs of the court. The next our Technology Committee, who we are very honored to serve with, and as Judge Wersching just said, this takes a team and a village in working behind all of the efforts. We adopt an approach to distribution of methodology each year based on the branch needs. In other words, we need to be flexible in these changing times. David's going to discuss with you in just a moment that transformation and what we're doing now. Finally, given our limited resources and at its core we always want to encourage collaboration in all aspects of our IT modernization funds. From the way we evaluate the process and the applications themselves, we are encouraging collaboration at every step of this impactful program. What I would like to do is a quick overview before I turn it over to David to discuss. When you look at this number, we had 46 courts that applied, submitting over \$62 million, almost \$73 million in requests for this mod funding. As you know there's only \$12.5 million available to allocate for that funding. What I will say is that also included 149 separate proposals that a tremendous team through our team reviewed each and every step along the way. We have had funding requests far exceeding what is available for allocation for the past five years, the amounts have ranged from \$50 million to \$68 million for modernization. This really limits a local court's ability to maintain reliability services, address the rising costs and, of course, keeping up with our public's expectations for secure, reliable, efficient technology.

Given the imbalance, and we've talked through some of the budget and you'll hear more later this morning, those gaps, it's more important now than ever that our funding approach and how we allocate these funds is deliberate, that it's thoughtful and is strategic. At this point I'd like to turn it over to Mr. Slayton to run through that methodology for you.

>> Thank you, Judge Hernandez, and good morning, everyone. The tech committee spent time before we released the IT mod applications trying to adopt a new approach that could continue to align with the program's guiding principles but would think about how we could use the very limited resources we have as effectively as possible. The approach we adopted aimed to rank for funding consideration similar to the way that great traditional grant programs rank applications, and the intent was to prioritize the most impactful proposals submitted by the courts. We also wanted to promote the three funding priorities for this cycle chosen by the council based upon the responses from the court's needs, and those included cyber and information security, case management system improvements and enhancements, and IT infrastructure. And to help drive progress in these top priority areas that have been identified by the courts. We wanted to encourage collaborative proposals, as Judge Hernandez was mentioning. Collaboration is important. We have limited resources, so when we can have courts collaborate and reuse technology that's a way we can maximize the funds. And so courts were urged to submit joint projects supported by letters of endorsement from other courts to maximize that funding. And then we wanted to invest funding where it was most needed to help level up courts and support achievement of baseline technology initiatives like basic cyber security, making sure everyone was at the same basic level. So to implement this new approach, the work stream from the information technology Advisory Committee led by Judge Hanson, the chair of that committee, and comprised of members across the branch including judges, CEOs, other administrative staff, technology and operational officers, they were tasked with completing a more in-depth criteria, reviewed all 149 applications in detail and scored them based upon criteria. The purpose of this change was to provide a more comprehensive review of project proposals, establish a framework that supported project ranking for funding consideration and that would align our evaluation approach with practices commonly used in traditional grant funding programs. In addition to ensuring the project met project requirements, the work stream evaluated key factors such as the project's alignment with this year's funding priorities. The number of courts that were involved in a collaboration with the project, the level of public benefit, the impact to improving a court's baseline security posture and the level of modernization or innovation proposed by the court. The work stream's role was simply this, to evaluate projects according to a set of criteria we provided to them. They were not aware of the impacts of each factor or its weighting in our final recommendations but they were looking at does the proposal meet these criteria? Once that was done and following that workstream's review, the Technology Committee applied weights to the evaluation criteria. They allowed us to score and rank those projects by those scores they'd been provided by ITAC. After we did all of that, after that ranking was done and we reviewed the results, we determined that we wanted to have a few other checks to make sure that we were using our funding as wisely as we could. Those included ensuring both appellate and trial courts receive funding even with the ranked model, confirming that there was no duplication of funding with other council grants, some of

which are on today's agenda. And if a project was already funded by one of those projects, it was removed from consideration here. We corrected requested amounts to align with program requirements. Sometimes there were items that were included that were not allowed to be funded by this program, so included facility-related costs. And then we monitored for excessive allocation where a court had multiple highly ranked projects to avoid creating large overages trying to spread the money as far as we could. Ultimately this year the Technology Committee is recommending this new funding approach. We want to fully fund the highest ranked projects until the \$12.5 billion allocated is exhausted. One project, because of that, is receiving partial funding because it fell right at the cut line, so we're just fund every that we can, and one of those projects will be partially funded because of that. You'll see and Judge Hernandez will talk about the wait list where perhaps that project will receive full funding if there's additional revenue available. The goal of this model is to direct to the projects with the greatest impact. In prior years the IT was to all courts regardless of the impact leaving many projects underfunded and unable to move forward. Courts often had to scale back or delay projects because partial allocations were not sufficient to deliver full outcomes. And lastly, the prior model made it difficult to assess statewide progress because it was fragmented across technology areas. Our new model ensures courts can fully deliver high-impact projects instead of stretching limited dollars across too many partially funded efforts. It creates greater transparency and predictability, highlighting specific projects for funding and enabling courts to plan with confidence, and it focuses limited funds on the projects that address the established priorities of greatest need by the Technology Committee and the council and this year security, case management and infrastructure. Therefore, we can assess better statewide progress as we move forward. This summary on the screen in front of you shows how the \$12.5 allocation is being recommended to be distributed across the top funding priorities. You'll see cyber and information security. We have 24 projects, the most number of projects that we're recommending funding but only \$3.27 million of that 12.5. In the case management system fewer projects, ten projects, but because of the extensive cost of the projects \$6.41 million, the largest of the investment area. IT infrastructure we're recommending funding 12 projects that would total \$2.1 million and a few other projects that are being funded that's just under \$700,000. And these include things such as a records automation review pilot, electronic evidence and electronic filing. I'll point out electronic filing in some of our smallest counties in the state who have not previously been able to offer that will be a big improvement. The \$12.5 million will be awarded to 32 courts including seven small courts and the Fifth District Court of Appeal who submitted for a collaborative on behalf of the appellate courts. Importantly, five of those projects, including the Fifth District Court of Appeals are these collaborative efforts that benefit 23 courts in total, so just those five also help 23 additional courts. With that I will turn it back over to Judge Hernandez who will speak more about the collaborative projects.

>> Thank you so much, David. And as you can see, it's a very robust comprehensive evaluation and assessment we have moved to and as David finished up with speaking to those collaboration projects, this was a new focus for our tech committee and this grant this year. The tech committee was driven by our commitment to better serve the branch with shared solutions, to realize those economies of scale, and support community problem solving together

maximizing that limited funding that you see in these charts that we've presented for you. With that in mind, included in our recommendation is the five approved projects for collaboration. I would like to bring your attention to that last Sierra project which is a collaborative project that was initiated by Sierra's Superior Court, but, as you note, it includes Modoc, Plumas and Trinity. These projects are ones that the courts will initiate the projects and partner courts will participate in that. With the example from the Sierra, they will seek to adopt and access modernization through respective case managements for their electronic filing. As we know electronic filing enables litigants, attorneys and justice partners to submit their documents online. The project reduces the need for in-person courthouse visits and removes significant geographic, financial and procedural barriers that we've all been talking about to make sure we're providing access to justice. Ultimately this project operationalizes while strengthening equitable access to justice offering our rural residents faster, more reliable and more accessible court services. The shared investments allowed the courts to pool their resources and maximize the limited funding. This covers our urban to rural, from small to large. Moving to the waitlist David spoke about. We have ten prioritized projects that are on a wait list. If a court cannot use its full award or can't complete the project within the timelines, the waitlist will allow us to quickly reallocate those funds to another court that's ready to move forward. This process keeps that local court project funding with our courts supporting timely project completion and maximizing the benefit of those funds. The impact is on how important technology is. The IT projects will deliver meaningful, measurable impact across our court operations. Investments in modern technology as you all know will expand our access to justice, broadening public access to court services and ensure more consistent service delivery across our appellate and Supreme Court. Improving our court collaboration by enabling information sharing and investing and a shared solution to limited funds. By replacing our aging and sometimes quite archaic systems that we all work within which then will reduce those operational risks and strengthening performance, security and reliability. And, of course, deploying our scalable solutions and duplication ensuring technology can quickly adapt to new Lastly but certainly not least, to mature court technology, the world that we are a part of by strengthening our cyber security and overall operational readiness to meet future demands. The needs continue. Technology is a foundation to what we do every day to keep our courts operational, security reliable across the state. I say it is the backbone to justice and how we deliver service to our public. Public expectations demand that the courts provide more digital and remote service. We've heard about that so many times and how important more data transparency and, of course, faster responses that the public also wants from us. We just can't keep pace at the rate we're at right now. With the rising costs that we've all heard about, some licensing fees that we just heard about, case management systems, hosting and operational IT expenses are increasing exponentially. But as we've discussed on other occasions and this morning, there is no dedicated funding for the maintenance and operational technology needs to keep our systems running and providing that access to justice. As a result of that lack of dedicated funding, ongoing IT support covered by the baseline budget which creates that competition for very limited resources at a time when technology needs to continue to grow and support our operations. You will see a presentation following this one talking about those budget change proposals and we're so very encouraging you to support those as well. The request of our entire

tech committee as well as thanking all of our JCIT staff, I join in all of those comments about our Judicial Council staff, but specifically this JCIT staff and the work they have done with this IT mod funding but every single day on so many different fronts. We're so grateful to you, Lisa, to Mr. Yee, your team. Chief, thank you to you for your incredible leadership and dedication to serving access to justice, but especially in this space for technology. I always carry this quote around. It's from one of your statements at the judiciary, because it's really important as we do so many of the words that you say, but when you talk about technology and you make sure it's a priority for our branch. You say, together we will continue to shape the future for the courts ensuring that technology serves as a bridge to justice. So what we're asking today is your consideration and approval to continue with that bridge in technology.

>> Thank you. Thank you both for your presentation today. Judge Hernandez, Mr. Slayton, in particular the level of detail that you've gone through to walk us through the methodology and selection criteria that you've applied, emphasizing quite clear in your presentation and the materials as well the focus on collaboration and the transparency that's involved in the process, so we appreciate that.

>> Are there any questions or comments?

>> Very impressive.

>> Thank you, Judge Moorman. Is that a motion for approval?

>> Yes. Is there a second? Oh, my gosh. I heard Judge Hallahan on the side. Thank you. All in favor say aye.

>> Aye.

>> Aye.

>> Any nos? Any abstentions? Thank you. This item is approved.

>> Thank you, Chief.

>> Thank you. And now with our fourth and final item, we will consider the fiscal year 2027-28 budget change proposals for the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal and our superior courts as well as the Habeas Corpus Resource Center. This is related to our Judicial Branch Facilities Program, item 26-40.

>> We welcome our presenters, Judge Ann Moorman, Chair of the Budget Committee and, again, we welcome Zlatko. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Chief. Good morning, everyone. As the Chief indicated, we are here on item 26-040, the judicial branch budget fiscal year '27-28 budget change proposals, affectionately called BCPs, I will probably use the acronym all morning. On behalf of BCP, we're here today to present the proposed budget change proposals. Part of the Budget Committee's charge under 10.15 subdivision b2 branch budget priorities. To do this the Budget Committee makes recommendations annually to the council regarding which budget change proposals should be moved forward to the Department of Finance. The judicial branch budget development process is a comprehensive seven-month process of seeking ideas from various Judicial Council advisory bodies for the highest priority needs in the branch. Advisory bodies submitting concepts must vote in open meetings to recommend a concept to the Budget Committee. Judicial staff and subject matter experts provide presentations on the concepts to the Judicial Branch Budget Committee and answer any questions Budget Committee members may have regarding any or each of the concepts. After all the concepts are gathered and all advisory committees have an opportunity to provide input on the concept, any are considered by the Budget Committee in an open meeting. As the process is conducted in an open meeting, the public and other stakeholders also have the opportunity for public comment. In previous years, as you have heard me say, the committee took the approach that it would recommend to the council only those concepts that we felt were essential for us to fulfill our core mission as a branch. At the same time recognizing fiscal conditions in the state. This year things are a little different. The fiscal year '27-28 budget will be the first budget considered by the new governor and their team. It is important to emphasize to the new administration, in our view, all of the critical needs of the branch that have been identified through our process. This change in executive is a unique and important opportunity to educate and inform the new administration of the challenges and the needs that we have as a branch in continuing to provide equal access to justice for all Californians, all court users, while at the same time acknowledging the state's multiyear projected deficit. The proposals before you today were not presented to you in any sort of order or priority because we believe through experience that the recommended proposals each represents something that is a high priority for the branch. This approach also gives greater flexibility to our chief Administrative Director and our Chief Justice in their budget advocacy efforts for programs and services. This year we had a total it have 33 concepts presented. Those include some of the capital outlay projects. The Judicial Branch Budget Committee reviewed and considered each of those. Some of those were combined. Some of those are not before you today. Those that are before you today, as I've indicated, represent the highest priority. These budget change concepts represent the highest values and priorities of the branch and represent the input of various branch advisory bodies, acknowledge the state's multiyear projected deficit, support greater access to justice for all Californians and assist vulnerable populations by advancing equity and justice. The fiscal year '27-28 recommended proposals focus on funding the branch's needs. If included in the '27 Budget Act, these proposals will provide funding for judicial branch priorities, some of which include inflationary funding adjustments to support trial court operations, facility support, security assessment and capital outlay, court-appointed council programs for the Supreme Court, and the Courts of Appeal, Racial Justice Act retroactivity, and branch wide cyber security just to name a few. The list represents a budget package that will provide the new executive and their team with information on the highest

priorities for the judicial branch. With the goal to increase equal access to justice for all Californians while also acknowledging a state's significant multiyear projected deficit and limited resources. The proposals before you today will benefit court users and the public by investing in interpreter services and increased compensation for court-appointed counsel, improving service quality and ensuring timely equitable justice for all Californians. Significant funding is allocated for ongoing technology support, cyber security improvements and modernization of data analytics and case management systems. These will protect sensitive court systems from cyber threats, improve operational reliability and support public access to digital court services, some of which we just heard a little bit about. The proposals also address the facility modifications and capital outlay projects to ensure safe, secure and efficient courthouses statewide that will protect court users and staff and support access to justice for all Californians. Speaking for a moment about the current budget year, the Budget Act of 2026 included several funding priorities that are currently before the council, or were earlier today. The Budget Act of 2026 included funding for 13 new judgeships over the next five years, \$150 million in one-time funding for deferred maintenance, a significant increase in the number of new courthouse construction projects for the next two fiscal years, and, as we've also heard, it includes \$20 million for the current fiscal year and the next fiscal year for language access services. Given the funding included in the '26 budget on behalf of the Judicial Branch Budget Committee today, I am making some modifications to the proposals before you. I'm suggesting some modifications, I should say. With regard to number 19, which speaks to 26 judgeships, I recommend and we recommend that should not go forward in light of the '26 Budget Act and considered as part of a future budget concept discussion. BCP number 16 for deferred maintenance for recommendation should not go forward in light of the \$150 million in the 2026 Budget Act. However, part of BCP number 16 includes \$2 million to assess 15 building management systems and we're asking that be included in BCP number 13 which relates to trial court facility modification. Finally, with regard to number 21, that's capital outlay funding for '27-28 through fiscal year 2031 and '32, we're asking that be modified and that staff be given the authority to modify it to reflect the updated approved courthouse construction funding in the 2026 Budget Act. As the Budget Committee chair, I recommend adopting the concepts before you today with these modifications. These modifications will then be submitted to the Department of Finance in September of 2026 for consideration by the new administration for the '27-28 Governor's Budget. One final modification or approach we're suggesting relates to number 24 which is language access in the California courts. We are suggesting that that concept not be forwarded in the fall and that we reserve it for the springtime at which time we will have a better idea how the \$20 million we're receiving this year and we will receive in the next fiscal year is being spent throughout the branch, and we will have a better idea what our actual needs are. I would like to thank the Budget Committee members, all the advisory committees that gave input, all the members of the public and other stakeholders that provided input to our meetings, Budget Committee staff. I will say to echo Judge Conklin to the extent that I sound even moderately intelligent, it is thanks to them. They put in a lot of work. We get a spreadsheet. We get Excel spreadsheets that are color coded, thoroughly vetted, very informative, and so I do want to acknowledge Budget Committee staff for all of your support. And, lastly, I want to say, I'm going to go off script to say, thank you, Chief, and thank you,

Shelley, for carrying these concepts forward through what I call the offseason, which is really just the on season, because without your advocacy and the really consistent and inspiring way that you carry forward our budgetary needs for the branch, we wouldn't be seeing the success that we are seeing, so thank you both for all your hard work and all your leadership in this area. Zlatko and I are here, happy to take any of your questions.

>> Thank you for a wonderful presentation and all of your efforts and advocacy and the thorough work that you put into thoughtful proposals before us. We really appreciate it. And also looking forward to working with the new administration. And someone said educating, I'm not sure if that's the right word, but our ongoing dialogue with them. Look forward to that, too. And I will open it up for questions.

>> I have a question.

>> Yes?

>> I'm just wondering, based on some of the public comment we heard, if there's anything in the \$20 million we previously heard about or in the BCPs that might help address some of those concerns specifically as it relates to interpreter staff pay?

>> A great question. Zlatko Theodorovic and glad to be here this morning. The bargaining that occurs happens regionally, and so those concerns are brought to each of the bargaining teams that are engaging in sort of the conditions of working pay, and so the funding will, if the cost of the staff increase, will address those costs, but this is currently based on our existing, sort of, expenditure pattern. As Judge Moorman has said, we will be looking to see if that is sufficient and to the extent there are additional costs happening locally, how do those fit within our budget. We also do have a limited budget so it can't be an unlimited increase in the salaries either, just like every other employee within the branch, it has to be funded within the resources we have available.

>> Thanks. I appreciate it.

>> Just to jump on to that. You know, the \$20 million that is in the current fiscal year we're in, the \$20 million we've been promised, I think is an indication that the executive and legislative branches hearing what's been a consistent call for the branch for, my cough button was on. That's a consistent message we've been trying to send that our language access needs have not only grown in terms of volume and numbers but in terms of dollars and cents, because getting certified, qualified, certified interpreters, whether you're a contract interpreter or a staff interpreter, is an absolutely essential need for us to perform our services. And the \$20 million, you know, we're going to watch how it gets spent. We're going to listen, we'll hear information about the interpreter needs throughout the courts and make recommendations about how the \$20 million will be spent. And then we'll go back and do surveys and we'll collect more

information on how it was spent and short. So we can continue in our advocacy efforts in that area.

>> Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Peters. Mr. Slayton.

>> Thank you very much, Chief. I just wanted to comment, not a question, just to thank the Budget Committee and all the advisory committees for this list. I started to highlight a few of them but as I looked through, so many things that are so important to the functioning of the branch. I'm glad that the Budget Committee is recommending to put them all forward because I think it's an opportunity to show where the needs are. As I look through the list, there are so many things in here that if this funding were provided would improve the services we can deliver to the public and the way we could operate. And so just thanks to all the advisory committees for putting it forward and the Budget Committee did to put these forward. I think they're great. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Mr. Slayton. Anyone else? Yes?

>> I just had one final comment and that is my last recommendation. I would say to the council would be that at some point in time you undertake a feasibility study to see if Zlatko could be cloned. I have received emails from him on a Friday to everyone on the committee at midnight. He needs some sleep.

>> If we could take a vote on that, it would be unanimous. I'll entertain a motion to love move approval of the item before us with the modifications as stated.

>> So moved.

>> Second.

>> Thank you. Mr. Slayton moves approval. Who was the second?

>> Peters.

>> Mr. Peters, thank you for your second. All those in favor, please say aye.

>> Aye.

>> Any nos or abstentions? Okay, this item is approved. Thank you. That does conclude our business meeting for today. Our next meeting is scheduled for October 15th and 16th. This meeting is adjourned. Thank you, all.